

Lawston Reed

Early Settlers' Personal History Questionnaire, WPA
Interviewed by Arthur R. Hill Hempstead County, Ark. April 15, 1941 .

Transcribed by Andrea E. Cantrell, University of Arkansas Libraries, 2003. [See transcriber's notes](#)

1. Early settler's name
Lawston Reed "Colored"
2. Address
212 West 4th Street. Hope, Arkansas.
3. Present occupation (most of the old timers are now retired).
Baptist Preacher.
4. Previous occupation or occupations.
August 2, 1855 86 years old.
5. Date of birth.
Chatteau Parish, La.
6. Place of birth.
Chattau Parish, La.
7. Married? To whom? When? Where?
Lucinda Green.
8. If an immigrant give particulars. City and country of derivation, name of ship on which arrived, etc.
Native of Louisana[sic]
9. How long has the individual resided in Arkansas?
30 years
10. If not a native tell of the voyage to Arkansas. Boat? Wagon train? etc.
Come on train.
11. Why did the individual come to Arkansas?
By choise[sic].
12. Get details of construction of early homes. (In the southern and southeastern parts of the state chimneys were frequently built of clay and split wood or trimmed branches due to the scarcity of stone and the lack of brick kilns. Some of the more pretentious houses were built with brick imported up the rivers. In the northwestern part of the state stone houses occurred much more frequently. Pay particular attention to these and similar regional differences.)
Log houses rough style stick and dirt chimney.
13. What form of lighting was used in the early days? Pine knots? Tallow dips? Candles poured at home? Oil or fat lamps? etc.
Tallow candles and pine torch and brass lamps.
14. When were electric lights first used in your community?
Mansfield, La. 1895
15. What kind of fuel was used? (This was wood in most parts of the state, of course, because it was plentiful and convenient, but in some of the western counties coal may have appeared early.
Wood and pine.
16. What kinds of food did the early settlers have? Were fish and game depended upon for

- the meat supply? Was game plentiful? What kinds?
Hog meat, farm products, game and fish,
17. What kinds of clothes were worn and how manufactured?
Jeans pants and hickory shirts
 18. Were there any interesting customs or incidents connected with early courtships? Was bundling ever practiced? (It is highly improbable but possible.) Were charivaries (usually pronounced 'shivaree' in Arkansas and the lower Mississippi Valley territory) frequent?
Came to homes and courted before parents.
 19. Compare some early food, clothing, etc. prices with those of today. (Since staples were usually bought in barrels, hogsheads, bushels, and similar large units, present prices will have to be quoted on the same basis.)
Flour barrel \$10.00 1866.
 20. What were some of the incidents pertaining to the sharing of food and other supplies in times of common need?
After war food was scarce and shared in common.
 21. What were some early cultivated crops? Domesticated animals? (For instance, when did tomatoes cease to be known as 'Love Apples,' regarded as poisonous? When moved from the flower garden to the vegetable garden?)
Corn, cotton, oats, rye, wheat,
 22. What were early farm implements? Any homemade? If purchased, where? Prices?
Bull tongue, shovels, Twisters, and solid sweeps.
 23. What were early industries in the community?
Gins, grist mills, horse power, and black smith shops.
 24. What were some native wild plants used as food or for flower gardens? (For example: mullein, sassafras roots, sweet gum resin, sun-flower seed, paw-paws, sumac berries, poke salad-- or salet, or salud. There are stories told of various food substitutes used during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. These might supply interesting sidelight.)
Poke salad, lamns[sic] quarter, wild onions,
 25. Relate interesting incidents of the early days. Tell of childhood impressions and memories. Tell of group activities such as house raisings and warmings, quilting bees, corn huskings, brush arbor meetings, dances, games, socials, hunts and game drives, hog killing, sorghum making, play parties, and the like. Compare early farm and town life with that of today. Tell any experiences relating to the Indians, their customs and habits.
Log rolling house raising, quilting bees, and sheep shearing.
 26. Tell of early methods of combating forest fires, town or building fires.
Faught[sic] by hand and dug dithes[sic] and plowed furrows.
 27. Get origin of place and thing names such as hills, valleys, rivers, soughs, bayous, plants, animals, etc.
Black bayon, Red Lake, Clear Lake,
 28. Tell of early taverns, hotels, boarding houses, stagecoach stations, boat landings, etc.
Chatteau, :arish[Parish?], La. Grand Bayon La.
 29. Tell of early schools.
Log houses in rural districts split log seats and desks.
 30. Location of school? Late?
Modern buildings intowns[sic],
 31. Name of teacher?

Jim Citizen Principal

32. How were funds provided? Tuition? How much? Was payment made in kind?
Tuition or pay school.
33. School books used? Title? Author? (Many of the old plantations maintained tutors either for individual families or groups of families. Sometimes 'school' was conducted on the premises for darkies'[sic] youngsters. Check on such information.)
Blue back speller, McGuffey reader.
34. What constituted the reading matter of the early settlers? Books? Magazines? Newspapers? Get titles and authors.
Had no newspapers in my early days.
35. Where was the first telegraph station in the community? When established?
Shreveport, La. 1875.
36. Tell of the early "Horse cars." When were trolley cars substituted? When buses?
New Orleans, La. 1894.
37. When and where was the first automobile seen?
Chatteau Parish, La.
38. When and where was the first train seen?
Shreveport, La. 1875.
39. When and where was the first airplane seen?
Hope, Arkansas 1918.
40. When did automotive busses begin interurban operation? (Give descriptions on the five foregoing.)
Don't remember,
41. Early theatrical performances? Local people? Traveling stock companies?
Flauting Theather [floating theater?] or palace on boats.
42. Tell of any important local celebration in memory of any individual or event.
None.
43. Does the individual recall any early historical character such as Sam Houston, Co. James Bowie, former President Zachery Taylor, the James boys, etc.?
James Bous[Boys?] 1881.
44. Tell of any duels. Where were they fought? By whom? Why?
None.
45. Tell of any feuds. Who was involved? Where? Why?
None.
46. Tell of any early tombstone inscriptions. Where?
None remembred[remembered?].
47. Tell of any bank robberies, stage holdups, executions of horse thieves or other impromptu executions, including lynchings. Give details.
None.
48. Tell of Civil War days, giving the fullest detail possible.
Yankee Soldiers made me bring canteen to them.
49. Tell of any battles, skirmishes, forays, etc., witnessed.
None remembered.
50. Tell of Reconstruction, the Carpetbaggers, scalawags, etc.
Carpet beggers[sic] burned crops and houses.
51. Get all information possible regarding the original Ku Klux Klan or similar organizations.
Ku Klus[Klux?] faught[sic] carpet beggers[sic], at nights and negroes[sic] had to stay home.

52. Tell of any participation in the establishment of any religious or fraternal organizations.
Organized Baptist Churches.
53. Tell of any military affiliations.
None.
54. Tell of any Indian mounds, cliff dwellings, caves, etc., that may be recalled. Get as accurate information as possible regarding artifacts, particularly such things as calendar stones, mortars, pottery, baskets, etc.
Hamburg, La.
55. Tell of any other historic sites.
None remembered.
56. What is total number of descendants?
2.
57. What are names and addresses of sons and daughters?
Lawston Reed. Lizzie Reed Chatteau Parish La.
58. Name some of the grandchildren and greatgrandchildren, if any.
5.
59. Tell of any books, diaries, journals, sketches, or newspaper articles the individual has written. Give details.
None.